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PARTY ORGANIZATIONS AND THEIR NOMINA- TIONS TO PUBLIC OFFICE IN NEW YORK CITY.

THE city of New York has undergone many transformations, political and social, since the blissful reigns of Wouter Van Twiller, William the Testy and Peter the Headstrong. It is not my purpose to describe the many changes, though these few pages may emphasize to the readers of *A History of New York* the difference between politics of the days of Diedrich Knickerbocker and those of the present time.

Constitutional government tends to become a rule of parties ; and where this phase of government has prevailed longest, as in England, this tendency is most marked. And just as the political history of the United States is included in the rise and fall of the Federalist, the Democratic, the Whig, and the Republican parties, so is that of the city of New York in the development and disappearance of their local organizations. As a result of the extension of the elective principle to judicial and administrative as well as political offices, party rule in America has become "machine rule ;" and our state and city history affords a graphic illustration of this development. The officers elected for the government of New York city alone are seventy in number : *viz.*, the mayor, the comptroller, the president of the board of aldermen, one alderman in each of the twenty-five districts, a sheriff, a county clerk, a register, four coroners, a district attorney, six justices of the superior court, six justices of the court of common pleas, six justices of the city court, one district court civil justice in each of the eleven judicial districts, a recorder, two judges of general sessions, a city judge, and a surrogate. In addition to these the city voters choose at the same time their national and state officers : the electors for president and vice-president of the United States

and nine congressmen, the governor, secretary of state, comptroller, treasurer, attorney-general, state-engineer and surveyor, the judges of the supreme court and court of appeals, and twenty-four assemblymen and eleven senators, elected according to districts.

The importance of the nominating machinery in America receives especial emphasis when this endless catalogue of public officials, dependent on party nomination and chosen by popular election, is brought into contrast with the list of elective offices in the European constitutional states. Neither in England, France nor Germany, do the electors vote for candidates for any executive, administrative or judicial office; election is confined to the legislative offices. In London, Paris and Berlin, the voters choose by election the city aldermen and, in the two last mentioned cities, the members of some unimportant councils. They vote also for the city representatives in the national legislature: in London, for the members of Parliament; in Paris, for those of the Chamber of Deputies; and in Berlin, for those of the Imperial Diet and also for members in the Prussian Diet. Public elections are not held in these cities to fill any other offices, national or local.

Political institutions are the outgrowth of political conditions. The New York party organizations and their method of nominations to public office are clearly the result of the number and the importance of the elective offices; and they have no counterpart in London, Paris or Berlin. A national party organization, based on state, county, and ward or district associations, all equally well disciplined, each with a permanent executive committee and a permanent chairman, usually the party dictator, — this, the American party organization, nominating and electing all national, state, and local officers, is unknown in England, France or Germany. Political clubs, devoted to their party principles, exist in these European countries, and they are the only form of permanent party organization. They advocate doctrines dear to the Liberal or the Conservative, in England; to the Bonapartist, the Monarchist or the Republican, in France; to the Conservative, the National-Liberal, the Ultramontane or

whatever else the party man styles himself, in Germany. They support and encourage party principles, not individuals; although, at times, they use their influence in nominations and lend their assistance in the campaign to the party candidates. No club established merely to nominate candidates to public office could take root in those countries, where the elections are infrequent and the elective offices few, any more than a party organization created solely to nominate candidates for the presidency could flourish in America. These clubs are to be found in the principal cities; their basis is not party suffrage, but club membership; though partly social in purpose and spirit, the conditions of admission are political; their connection with other associations of the same party, if there be any, is very slight.

In England, the leading clubs are located in London. The best known are the Carlton, the Conservative, the Junior Carlton, St. Stephens, the Reform, the Devonshire and the Liberal. Nominations, though frequently made by the clubs or at their suggestion, emanate at times from other sources; it may be from self-nomination, from family influence in the rural districts, or from a conference of party voters in the cities.

In France, the political clubs represent about the same influence and activity; they are to be found chiefly in Paris. The members of the Chamber of Deputies, in groups called *comités*, determined by party sympathy and neighborhood relations, usually make the nominations and manage and conduct the national elections.

In Germany, the party organism is almost equally undeveloped. The leading political parties have clubs in the more important cities. They frequently suggest available candidates, and the names suggested are submitted to public meetings, whose function is understood to be ratification rather than discussion. Except perhaps at the annual reunion of the party leaders, known as the *Parteitag*, held for the adoption of the party platform, conventions and delegates are unknown. Even at these meetings the various clubs are not always, nor as a rule, officially represented; the leading members of the party throughout the empire assemble there without formal call or

credentials. This is the German substitute for national conventions and delegates.

Neither in Paris nor in Berlin nor in London are there any permanent political associations which arrogate to themselves the right to make all nominations to public office ; nor is there any absolute uniformity in the method of the selection of candidates. The political clubs, in so far as nominations are made by them, represent aristocratic rather than democratic influences. Mr. Bright and Mr. Chamberlain, advocates of radicalism in party organization as well as in party policy, desired to establish an association to be based on the suffrages of the voters of the Liberal party and not merely on club membership. But their avowed purpose was "to submit to the federated associations political questions and measures upon which united action may be considered desirable." Even their elaborate plan was intended to define and ascertain the party principles, not to select the party candidates.

The early forms of party activity in the United States, and especially in the state and city of New York, were equally simple. Nominations were usually made by legislative caucus : by congressmen for national elections, and by state legislators for state officers. But at that time the political constitution of the state and city was totally different, and much more in harmony with the institutions of the European states of to-day. For more than thirty years after the adoption of the constitution of the United States, the only municipal officers chosen by election in New York city were the aldermen and the constables. All other local and all state officials, except the governor, assemblymen and senators, were appointed by the council of appointment. Early in this century, Aaron Burr, and later Martin Van Buren and the Albany regency, used the enormous powers of this council to influence the action of the caucus. This interference and the radical changes made by the constitution of 1821, which widened the suffrage and largely increased the number of elective offices, strengthened the demand of the people for a more representative nominating body. In that year, with the rallying cries of "no more legislative nomina-

tions," "the people must be heard," the convention plan was introduced. The object of the change was to popularize and purify party action. The convention, as Thurlow Weed said, was intended to realize "the policy of nominations emanating directly from the people instead of from the legislative caucus."

Nominations to public office are still made by conventions; and the tendency to enlarge the number of elective offices prevails. In New York city, as we have seen, seventy officers are chosen by popular election for the government of the city alone. Under these circumstances the question is pertinent: Do nominations to public office emanate from the people?

There are in the city of New York to-day three powerful political organizations, of which any two can command the vote of the majority of the voters on election day. These are Tammany Hall, the County Democracy and the Republican party association.

Tammany Hall is the oldest organization in American politics. For more than eighty years it has been a powerful political factor. Revolts against its despotism have given recognition at different times to Mozart Hall, Apollo Hall, the Young Democracy, Irving Hall, and the County Democracy, as the representative associations of the Democratic party. They were established to combat the misrule of Tammany; and all, in time, appeased by her caresses and favors, came back to their ancestral home, conscious of guilt and of folly. And full of maternal love for her erring sons, Tammany has folded each in its turn to her bosom.

The County Democracy, established in December of the year 1880, protested, as had the other Democratic organizations, against Tammany misrule, and made promises of unrelenting warfare against its supremacy. But already in 1882, by the combined support of Mr. Edson as the mayoralty candidate, was the reconciliation between these two wings of the Democratic party begun, and to-day it is almost complete. These two nominally independent bodies, standing on the same platform of national principles and pursuing the same ends in municipal

government, are now in fact but one organization. They both understand the importance of the maxim: "United we stand; divided we fall."

The Republican voters, because of their fewer numbers, have at no time given recognition to any but the regular organization.

Tammany Hall, the County Democracy and the Republican association control all elections in New York city. The machinery of each is very much the same. At first simple in structure, it has attained by gradual growth its present highly developed form; and to-day the party organizations may justly lay claim to that perfection which the Duke of Wellington ascribed to the House of Commons in the year 1831. To him any reform of the Parliament seemed sacrilegious; and he piously declared that he would, if creating a representative assembly, copy exactly the plan of the House of Commons. There are many political Dukes of Wellington to-day to whom the party organizations in New York city seem as faultless.

But in spite of this perfection there has been much friction in the working of the complicated political machinery of the parties, and especially in their primary elections for the selection of candidates to public office. The abuses have become matters of public discussion. In these discussions, the controversy has become centered upon the manipulation of the voting rolls, the qualification of voters, the secrecy concerning the time and place of voting, and fraud and irregularity in the count—the most glaring evils in our primary elections.

What primary elections in New York city at last came to be, is clearly reflected in documentary, now historical, evidence. Writing of the Republican primaries (about the year 1880), one of the party leaders stated, in a letter to Chester A. Arthur:

The rolls are deceptive. . . . In one district half the names of those on the rolls are not known in the district. These bogus names afford a convenient means for fraudulent voting. The rolls of many of the districts are full of the names of men not Republicans, and are used by the managers to perpetuate their control of the associations. On the other hand, desirable members, good Republicans, who have an absolute

right to become members, are excluded. Sometimes this is done by a direct rejection, but oftener by a refusal to vote upon the names presented.¹

The recognition of these conditions led to the reorganization of the party in the year 1883.

The primaries of Tammany form a chapter in our recent local history. Their control, as is well known, was one of the means whereby William M. Tweed made himself party autocrat, and finally city boss. His candidates for judicial office and his many other official hirelings owed their nominations to packed primaries. When the opposition to Tweed began to show itself, a paper was circulated by the Young Democracy, summoning Tweed to convene the "general committee" of Tammany Hall to test the relative strength of the opposing factions. A call was finally issued; but, finding themselves decidedly in the minority, the leading spirits of the Ring closed the hall and prevented the assembling of the committee.

Tammany also reorganized after Tweed's downfall, but the corruption of the Tammany primaries continued, and was so generally conceded and recognized that the County Democracy association received a ready and large support from the Democratic voters, when it declared² it to be its purpose "to base its organization on the action of the mass of the voters of the party and to take it out of the control of the halls."

It is clear that before 1881 nominations, even though made by party conventions and not by legislative caucus, did not always "emanate directly from the people." Have the recent party reorganizations freed the voters from the control of the party managers, and bestowed upon the people an actual nominating power?

In these three organizations — Tammany, County Democracy and the Republican — the party voters are assembled to elect, not the party candidates, but delegates to nominating conventions. According to the Republican and the Tammany plans,

¹ The Independent Movement in New York, p. 102. (G. P. Putnam's Sons, N.Y., 1880.)

² In the Plan for Organization adopted by the Committee of One Hundred, March 23, 1881.

the assembly district, and according to the County Democracy plan, the election district, is the unit for primary voting. The primary ballots contain the names of candidates, not for public office, but for the nominating conventions of the party. The list of such candidates is not ordinarily a brief one ; on the contrary, the ticket is covered over its entire length and breadth with names of proposed delegates.¹ At the last Tammany primary election in the twenty-first assembly district, 116 delegates were selected, by less than 50 voters, to find *one* suitable candidate from that district for state-assemblyman. The delegates were elected at 104 West 47th street, to assemble at 104 West 47th street.

In some of our states, the indirect primary election has been superseded by a direct vote for the party candidates for local office ; but in New York the rules of the party associations have not been modified in this direction. They have been changed from time to time, but only to give further assurance that the qualified alone shall vote, and that all votes cast at the primaries shall be counted. To attain these ends, the by-laws of the Republican association were radically amended in 1883. Many of the old tests of membership were abolished, and additional safeguards to preserve the purity of primary elections were introduced. The constitution and rules of the county committee now provide, as to membership in the assembly organizations, as follows :

The fundamental test of the right of any person to be enrolled, shall be that he is a qualified voter of the assembly district in which he proposes to enroll, and that he voted at the last election for electors of president and vice-president of the United States for the electors of the Republican party, or if he has since the last presidential election voted at a state election, he must have voted for the candidates of the Republican party for state officers.

As only members duly enrolled are entitled to vote, this provision, if heeded, would be found liberal enough to enable

¹ At the last election, the Tammany primary tickets contained, in the twenty-first assembly district, 351 names; in the nineteenth, 630 names. The Republican primary ticket of the twenty-first assembly district contained 138 names.

all in sympathy with the party to enroll and vote, and sufficiently definite to exclude all not entitled to these privileges. The rules further provide that the roll of membership shall be accessible at all convenient times to any enrolled voter for inspection and challenge ; that proper notice by advertisement of all elections shall be given ; that all elections shall be by ballot, the candidates for all offices to be filled being voted for on a single ballot, printed on plain white paper ; that the polls shall be kept open from three o'clock to ten o'clock P.M., and in any district where the enrolled voters shall exceed 700, from eight o'clock A.M. to ten o'clock P.M. under certain conditions ; that the inspectors shall provide two ballot-boxes in each district at every primary election ; that they shall proceed in the canvass of ballots in the manner required by law for canvassing at state elections in this city ; that they shall publicly announce the result, and shall before leaving the place of meeting certify the same in duplicate, and within twenty-four hours deliver one copy of the returns to each person or delegation elected, and file the other with the secretary of the county committee ; that they shall also file with the secretary of the county committee the poll-lists and oaths taken by the inspectors as required by law, and that each party interested in the election may be represented by two watchers. These provisions, though found to be somewhat faulty in application, are immeasurably superior to those of the superseded constitution and would be sufficient, if observed, to insure an honest count.

The by-laws of the Democratic Republican General Committee of the city of New York, better known to the community as Tammany Hall, provide as follows :

The committee on organization shall be charged with the consideration of all matters relating to organization of the Democratic party, the call of primary elections, and the conducting of primary, general, special and charter elections ; *and shall in their discretion have power of revision and substitution of all nominations hereafter made by conventions, called by the general committee, or any district committee of this organization, whenever the honor, preservation and integrity of this organization shall require such action.*¹

¹ Article viii, § 7.

The italicized clause shows how truly "Democratic Republican" is the spirit which pervades Tammany Hall. Equally significant is the fact that these by-laws recognize no elections except those for members of the assembly district committee. As to these, it is provided that "the Democratic voters in each assembly district *acting in unison with Tammany Hall*," shall choose by ballot delegates to the assembly district committee.

The crudeness of these rules for the conduct of the Tammany elections, is plainly apparent by their contrast with those of the Republican association. There is no suggestion in them as to an enrollment of voters, and no qualification or restriction as to voting is imposed, except such as can be found in the phrase "acting in unison with Tammany Hall." The alien as well as the minor may be in unison; in practice any one can rise into the exalted state of being "in unison," and attain the privilege of voting — if he is willing to vote the right way. Neither are there to be found in these by-laws any provisions for inspectors, for voting by ballot, for a count, nor for official returns of the result.

The rules of the County Democracy are to be found in its *Plan for Organization*. They provide that

all Democratic voters who voted in the election district in which they reside at any primary election duly called under this plan, held in the district during the next preceding or the current year, shall be members of the election district association of the district; that the secretary of each association shall furnish a list of names and residences of the members and officers of the association to the secretary of the assembly district committee; that it shall also be his duty to have a correct list of the members voting at all primaries held in the district; and that public notice, not less than four days before the holding of such primaries, shall be given, in one or more of the principal Democratic newspapers, of the time and place for holding such primary meetings.

The provisions for notice are complete, but the plan is fatally defective in a failure to provide for an enrollment. Voting at the primaries of the County Democracy is not restricted to the members of the election district association, as it is to those of the assembly district organization in the Republican party.

Any one in sympathy with the principles of Democracy may vote. "In sympathy" has all the precision of "in unison." As to the conduct of elections, it is ordered that if, fifteen minutes after the time appointed for a primary meeting, twenty members have not appeared, the meeting may be organized with a less number present; that two tellers shall be chosen from among the persons entitled to vote at the primary election, each primary voter being entitled to vote for one teller only; that the election shall take place in open meeting; that each person offering to vote shall state his name and residence, which shall thereupon be announced by the chairman and be recorded by the tellers; that in voting for convention delegates or committee members, each person shall state for whom he votes or shall hand to the judge an open ballot; that the polls shall be kept open for one hour and until every person then present and entitled thereto has had an opportunity to vote. The chairman of the committee and the tellers form the judges of election; they shall canvass the vote and announce and certify the result; duplicates of the result shall be filed, one with the secretary of the assembly district committee, another with the secretary of the election district association. These provisions are almost as exhaustive as those to be found in the constitution of the Republican county committee, and, it might be thought, are adequate to secure an honest vote and a fair count, and truly to represent "the action of the mass of the voters of the party and to take it out of the control of the halls."

The founders of the County Democracy recognized the faults of the Republican and Tammany systems. They saw that membership in the Republican organizations was given or denied capriciously, and that the nominal qualifications became in practice "acceptability to the assembly leader"; and it was equally clear to them that the Tammany plan, which resulted in a gathering, out of a voting population of as many as ten thousand, of only one or two hundred, not known to be either voters or Democrats, was inadequate. In the County Democracy plan, the election district was adopted as the unit of party organization. It was hoped that its associations — in many parts of

the city there is one election district to every street block — would, as in neighborhood guilds or town meetings, automatically exclude all but those entitled to vote, and that this arrangement would avoid at once the close corporation form of the Republican associations and the indiscriminate voting of the Tammany primaries. Another innovation was the substitution of the open for the secret ballot. The benefits anticipated from this change have not been realized. The public influence and pressure at primary elections, which it was hoped would impress the voter, if required to declare his vote openly, with a feeling of responsibility, emanates in practice from the party leaders. Instead of securing independence, the declared vote produces a more thorough servility to the leaders, captains and lieutenants.

To complete and strengthen these by-laws of the party associations and to secure honest party elections, the legislature of this state has passed several acts. The law of 1866 was the first effort at governmental regulation. The act of 1882 regulated the duties of inspectors, and imposed penalties upon illegal voting and the bribery of voters and delegates. In the year 1887 a more comprehensive plan of primary control than any heretofore attempted became part of our law. The act of 1887 is limited in its application to cities of over ten thousand inhabitants. It provides that the primary elections shall be presided over by inspectors *selected according to the rules of the party organization*; ¹ and that the candidates or a majority of them may appoint one elector as watcher at the poll, on whom is conferred ample power to protect their interests. The law defines the necessary qualifications of electors to be *those prescribed by the regulations of the association holding the primary*,² provided that no such regulation shall authorize electors of opposite political faith to vote, and that no person shall be qualified to vote unless he is twenty-one years of age, a citizen of the United States, and a resident for ten days in the ward

¹ The Tammany by-laws make no provision for inspectors of election.

² The regulations of Tammany Hall and the County Democracy, it will be remembered, qualify all who are "in unison" or "in sympathy."

or district in which the primary is held. The polls of the primaries shall be open, between 9 A.M. and 9 P.M., *at such hours as the political organization shall prescribe*,¹ provided at least one hour is allowed for the holding of the poll. The inspectors are required to keep a poll-list of the name and residence of each person voting at the election, and they shall immediately after the completion of the canvass publicly announce the vote thereat, and shall, within eighteen hours,

file the returns in the office of the city clerk where such election is held, except that in the city of New York the same shall be filed in the office of the register of said city, and in the several cities of the state other than the city of New York in which the county clerk's office is kept, the same shall be filed in the office of the county clerk.

This act contains abundant provisions penal in nature, to command respect and obedience. But by its terms it is not applicable to the political organizations which may desire to avoid its provisions; and these organizations are, of course, most in need of it. The scope of the act is thus limited :

The provisions aforesaid in reference to voting by ballot, the time for holding open the polls, the taking of an oath by the inspectors required by section 6, the use of a ballot-box at such primaries, the keeping of a poll-list of the electors voting and the filing of returns need not be observed *unless the rules and regulations of the organization calling such primary shall require an election by ballot*, or unless twelve hours before such primary is appointed to be held, five qualified electors of the district shall serve upon the presiding officer or secretary of the general committee of the political party, organization, or association, in the city in which such primary election is to be held, or upon the chairman of the district committee of such district, a notice or demand in writing signed by them stating that they require the aforesaid provisions to be observed at such primary, or unless such primary meeting shall itself by a vote of those present, resolve to observe such provisions, then in such case such provisions shall be strictly and fairly observed.

The rules and regulations of Tammany, as we have seen, require voting by ballot only for the election of delegates to the assembly district committee, not for the election of delegates to nominating conventions. Neither is election by ballot made

¹ The Tammany by-laws prescribe no time.

obligatory at the primaries of the County Democracy ; on the contrary a declared vote is preferred. The rules of the Republican party make voting by ballot at its primary elections necessary. The law is therefore binding in all its details on the Republican party, but not at all on the County Democracy. It affects those Tammany elections which are held to choose delegates to the assembly district committee and, of its other elections, those at which the committee on organization shall prescribe the use of ballots. This committee ordered for the late elections that "each ballot shall be without indorsement," implying the use of ballots.

Since the passage of the act of 1887, each of the political organizations has held several elections. Tammany and the County Democracy each held an election early in September to choose delegates to the Democratic state convention ; another in October to select delegates to conventions for the nomination of candidates for the November elections ; and a third late in December for the annual election of the association officers. The Republican party has held two elections : one in September to select delegates to the state convention, and another in October to select delegates to nominating conventions. The records of the register's office in our city reveal the extent to which the law has been operative, and they afford us an opportunity to give an unanswerable reply to the question whether the New York city primaries, after their many reorganizations and with the existing state control, are honorably conducted and representative in character.¹

The Republican party has filed returns for its two elections from all the assembly districts except the eighth and eighteenth. The leaders of these two assembly districts, who are very practical politicians, did not file any returns, thereby violating the state law. The official records of the Republican elections are presented below in contrast with the Republican voting strength on election day.

¹ The law was not observed in the other cities of the state. A search was made in the offices of the city clerks of Cohoes, Utica and Ogdensburg, and in those of the county clerks of Oswego and Rochester. In none of these cities were any returns of primary elections filed.

REPUBLICAN VOTE AT GENERAL AND PRIMARY ELECTIONS.¹

ASSEMBLY DISTRICT.	TOTAL REPUBLICAN VOTES.	PRIMARY VOTES.	
		State Conven- tion.	Nominating Convention.
First	960	481	226
Second	780	91	116
Third	1410	89	69
Fourth	985	152	78
Fifth	1460	84	86
Sixth	1410	160	157
Seventh	3750	74	106
Eighth			
Ninth	3230	121	107
Tenth	2850	326	233
Eleventh	2700	51	58
Twelfth	1775	64	76
Thirteenth	3700	178	640
Fourteenth	1070	183	153
Fifteenth	2185	136	107
Sixteenth	1280	318	336
Seventeenth	3200	342	235
Eighteenth			
Nineteenth	4340	55	63
Twentieth	1965	86	101
Twenty-first	3425	90	112
Twenty-second	3660	194	194
Twenty-third	5700	895	699
Twenty-fourth	2980		
23d ward		143	100
24th ward		30	32
Total	54,815	4343	4074

These figures cannot be passed over without some comment, though they speak with all the force of Nast's caricatures — for

¹ The figures in the first column are based upon the vote cast for state officers at the October election. A much larger vote was cast for other Republican candidates.

are they not truly caricatures? Less than eight per cent of the Republican voters took part in the primary elections. In only eight of the assembly districts did the percentage of primary voters rise above ten; in some districts the representation was as low as two per cent, and in eleven it was about or below five per cent. It should not be forgotten that whether we look at the vote in the good or in the bad districts, the result is the same: the party voters are not represented. With the statement of the result of the election is filed the printed ballot, prepared of course before the primary meeting — and the reader may venture to guess by whom. This ticket was voted without a scratch in almost every case, and every candidate received almost invariably the same total vote.

Tammany Hall filed returns for the sixteenth assembly district only. In its October primary election, 200 votes were cast; in its December election, 238 votes. The Democratic vote in this district is over 4000.¹

County Democracy was naïve enough to file some of the returns of its September elections, but it has filed none since. Even these returns are very incomplete.² The statement of some of them, presented herewith, will fairly illustrate the voting at the County Democracy primaries.

¹ The proportion of the total Democratic vote cast respectively by Tammany and County Democracy is hard to estimate, because of the frequency of "fusions" and of "deals." Strictly speaking, Tammany's primary vote ought not to be compared with the total Democratic vote, since those only who are "in unison with Tammany Hall" are entitled to vote at its primaries. In the County Democracy primaries, on the other hand, all Democrats are qualified to vote; so that the comparison of its primary vote with the total Democratic vote is technically defensible. The figures given for total Democratic vote, above and in the following table, represent the party vote for state officers at the October election.

² It filed no returns for the second, third, fourth, fifth, seventh, ninth, thirteenth, seventeenth, eighteenth, twentieth and twenty-second assembly districts. Of the first assembly district, it filed the returns of the twelfth election district only; of the sixth assembly district, there are missing the returns from the third, twelfth, sixteenth and twentieth election districts; of the returns of the twenty-third assembly district, there is missing that of the sixty-third election district; of the twenty-fourth assembly district, those of the twentieth and the twenty-fourth election districts. That *any* returns were filed was due, as several of the leaders have admitted, to their ignorance of the position of the County Democracy under the law. They did not at once see that the act was — as one of them now terms it — "an hallucination of reformers."

SIXTH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT. TOTAL DEMOCRATIC VOTE AND COUNTY
DEMOCRACY PRIMARY VOTE.

ELECTION DISTRICT.	DEMOCRATIC VOTES.	PRIMARY VOTES.	DELEGATES.
First	140	10	2
Second	205	11	2
Third			
Fourth	250	13	3
Fifth	165	14	2
Sixth	175	6	2
Seventh	205	15	3
Eighth	190	10	2
Ninth	200	11	2
Tenth	85	23	2
Eleventh	175	11	2
Twelfth			
Thirteenth	115	11	2
Fourteenth	185	10	2
Fifteenth	185	13	2
Sixteenth			
Seventeenth	190	7	2
Eighteenth	160	13	2
Nineteenth	120	12	2
Twentieth			
Twenty-first	140	7	2
Twenty-second	155	8	3
Twenty-third	150	16	2
Twenty-fourth	210	16	2
Twenty-fifth	85	12	2
Twenty-sixth	185	6	2
Twenty-seventh	150	17	2
Twenty-eighth	165	16	2
Total	3985	288	51

In this assembly district, less than seven per cent of the Democratic voters participated in the primary election ; of these, *sixty-nine* voters, or nearly one-fourth, were officers of election, and there were not six times as many votes cast as there were delegates chosen.

It will not be necessary to present in the same way the votes at all the County Democracy primaries. It will be sufficient to summarize the votes of certain districts. There were 288 voters in the sixth, 322 in the eighth, 646 in the fifteenth, and 363 in the twenty-first assembly districts. The Democratic voting strength in these districts is fairly represented by the following figures: 4900 in the sixth; 3300 in the eighth; 4800 in the fifteenth; and 3600 in the twenty-first. This shows that less than ten per cent of the Democratic voters attended the County Democracy primaries in these assembly districts.

This array of numbers is sufficient to demonstrate how remote is the relation between a nomination conferred at a party primary and a real expression of the party will. But an investigation of the names which make up the numbers carries the demonstration into the realm of the ridiculous. There are remarkable coincidences between the names on the voting roll and those of the delegates. The most striking examples occur in the returns filed by the County Democracy. Take the sixth assembly district: in the sixth election district, six votes were cast for two delegates, Josiah Rolfes and Henry Goldfogle, and these two delegates each cast a vote, that is, they cast one-third of the total vote; in the twenty-sixth election district a delegate by the name of Samuel Aufner was elected by six votes, two of which were cast by Benjamin and Moses Aufner. In the eighth assembly district we find some equally peculiar combinations. In the sixth election district, eleven votes were cast for Henry Lax; one of the tellers was by name August Blind, and among the voters were William Blind Sr., William Blind Jr., August Blind and Otto Blind. In the tenth election district, two votes were cast and two delegates were elected; the two voters were brothers. In the eleventh election district, eight votes were cast for two delegates, Geo. S. Cornell and Benjamin Benjamin; and on the roll of voters are to be found the names of Joseph Cornell, George S. Cornell, and Benjamin P. Benjamin. In the twenty-third election district, seven votes were cast for David Hirshfield; and Henry Hirshfield and David Hirshfield, reinforced by three brothers Edward, George V.

and Thomas Welsh, carried the election. In the twenty-ninth election district, the Laber family were the standard bearers. For convenience of reference, these elections might be called, respectively, the Aufner, the Blind, the Hirshfield and the Laber family primaries.

To enable the writer to present the result of the December primary elections of the County Democracy and Tammany Hall, the returns of which it was known would not be filed, persons were detailed to attend the meetings. It may not be amiss to quote some of the reports. The published notice of Tammany ordered that the election should be held between 7.30 and 9 P.M., and that "inspectors must fully comply with the primary election laws of the state of New York *so far as the same are applicable.*" The extent to which Tammany regards the election laws as applicable is amusing. In the second assembly district, there were about thirty people in the meeting rooms; the reporter remained from 7.30 to 8.15 P.M. and saw no meeting whatsoever; before leaving the room he asked one of the persons in attendance whether there would be a meeting, and he was told "most probably not, because there is no opposition." In the fourth assembly district, the reporter attended from 7 to 9 P.M.; he saw people sitting about the room playing poker and other games of cards; the meeting was not called to order until 8.40 P.M. because the man with the ballots did not arrive. It was then moved that the secretary be authorized to cast one vote for the society; which being done, the meeting was adjourned. At the place advertised for the holding of the election in the sixth assembly district, the reporter attended from 7.15 to 9 P.M. but he saw no voting. In the eighth assembly district the voters were assembled in a card room and no concealment was made of the chips and crib-boards; the meeting was called to order at 8 P.M. and was adjourned in fifteen minutes, and during these fifteen minutes card games were being played; the voting was by acclamation. The meeting of the tenth assembly district was called to order at 7.45 P.M.; some one asked the chairman: "Who are the delegates that were selected for election?" The chairman thereupon instructed the

secretary to read the printed ballot ; it was read and accepted ; the meeting was adjourned at 8.10. The other reports were of very much the same character. Nowhere were there ballot-boxes or tally-lists ; in some of the districts there were no meetings, and in many of them the meetings were not held at the time appointed by the committee on organization. Evidently Tammany does not regard the election laws as "applicable" very far, for it holds its elections at such time and in such manner as it pleases. The elaborate formality of these meetings, and the spirited assertion in them of the American citizen's birthright, resulted in the choice at each of them of not less than fifty persons as delegates. In the sixth assembly district one hundred and fifty persons were chosen as delegates — at a meeting, it should be remembered, which did not take place and by a vote which was not given.

The County Democracy meetings were not very different from what the filed returns of the September elections would lead us to expect. At more than half of the polling places there was no election. In fact, many of the meetings were not held, being, in the words of a Tammany leader, "myths." In one of the election districts of the sixth assembly district, where one delegate was chosen, only one vote was cast ; after a little while the candidate for delegate dropped twenty-two ballots in the box and wrote on the tally-sheet twenty-two names. The ballot-box was opened and the result declared, that the candidate was elected delegate by twenty-three votes. This delegate-elect foretold with great accuracy the number of votes cast and the successful candidates in other election districts.

These are the results of an impartial investigation of primary elections in New York city. They prove clearly that the party elections are all non-representative, and conducted with an equal disregard of law and of honesty. The candidates chosen through them reflect in very many cases these conditions ; they do not always, merely because in some of the assembly districts of this city the rule of the ignorant and the vicious would not be tolerated, and candidates representing their ideas and purposes would not command the suffrages of the party voters.

These facts restrain and control the bad influences of corrupt primaries, but they do not remove them. Neither does an independent press nor a conscientious discharge of the duties of citizenship on election day ; they mitigate but do not root out the evils.

Already it is evident either that the present legislative control of the primary elections and conventions of political parties is insufficient and inadequate, or that the existing, and in fact any legislative control is unnecessary and undesirable. If the latter be true, the act of 1887 should be promptly repealed ; if the former, the evils of corruption at primaries and of their resulting non-representative nominations to public office are of sufficient importance to warrant a further and a more complete state supervision. There is a marked tendency to-day towards a governmental control over many subjects to which it was foreign some decades ago. Though at times it is the part of wise statesmanship to hesitate in a further extension of governmental powers, yet it should be remembered that this tendency is the result of changed conditions which must be recognized in order better to guarantee the personal liberty and the personal security of the citizens. The printing and distribution of ballots by the state, a subject now favorably discussed at public meetings and by the press, is a departure towards a larger governmental activity which would have startled our ancestors ; but it is not the less needful and important. On the purity of primary elections depend good nominations and, quite as truly, efficient public officials ; for the party label in almost every case commends the candidate to the electors ; his trade mark is voted for, and not his character. Many states, accordingly, have found legislation in the direction of primary control wise and important. California, Colorado, Connecticut, Illinois, Ohio, and Pennsylvania, among others, have laws of greater or less stringency concerning the primary elections ; and these are already productive of good results.¹ The New York law of

¹ A correspondent from Lancaster, Pennsylvania, writes Jan. 21, 1888, as follows : "I have just closed a protracted trial of an election fraud case under our primary laws with a conviction of the entire board of election officers. I think that is an answer to the question as to whether the bosses run the primaries to their satisfaction."

1887, though quite comprehensive, should not have been restricted to the organizations that might be pleased to observe it. And it is inadequate in its failure to provide for an enrollment or registration of party electors as a condition precedent to voting at the primaries. Enrollment of the qualified voters is as necessary to party elections as is registration at public elections. While the voters are vaguely defined as being "in unison" or "in sympathy," as in the by-laws of Tammany Hall and of the County Democracy; or so long as the voting privilege is dependent on admission to a club, which is given or denied capriciously, as in the Republican party,¹—so long will party elections be non-representative. The conduct of these elections and the count of the votes should be assumed by the state. The guaranty of a fair vote, which such state control alone can give, will make the primary elections as popular as public elections.

There is an intimate connection between the corrupt party primaries and the rule of the criminal classes in politics. This point was well put in the editorial columns of *The* (New York) *Evening Post*, in an article entitled, *The Rule of the Criminal Classes*. This article had particular reference to some frauds at the Baltimore primaries, but it is not restricted in its conclusions to that city.² The reality of the connection cannot

¹ A very worthy leader in the Republican organization stated that the qualifications of membership prescribed in the by-laws become in practice simply acceptability to the party boss. Furthermore, that the leader of the assembly district can and does control the membership roll. During the past summer in one of the assembly districts in New York city a contest was expected; the leader proposed for membership—and too late for his opponent to counteract this increase, because the by-laws require a certain interval of time—a sufficient number of names to continue his control. This is the testimony of a prominent Republican. It was given to show how unsatisfactory are the present rules of the organization.

² "Mr. Cowen seeks to establish three propositions; viz., that in the primary elections of the city of Baltimore the candidates for state and municipal offices are selected by men of criminal character by criminal means; that in such elections the majority does not govern, but that men of criminal record falsify the count and by different methods, distinctly criminal, reverse the will of the people; that the city officials who get office by these means recognize in their appointments their dependence on the criminal class, and act in accordance with its demands." *The* (New York) *Evening Post*, Feb. 18, 1887.

be better illustrated than in the rule of the Tweed Ring. Describing this "episode" in our municipal history, Mr. Wingate writes:

It is now only proposed to briefly recapitulate certain of the more immediate and superficial aspects of that social condition, which rendered possible the supremacy of the Ring. First and foremost among these was the foreign element in the caucus and at the polls. The majority of the better class of people were so absorbed in their private matters that they could hardly be induced even to vote, leaving the few honest men who had sufficient public spirit to attend primaries and supervise nominations to be driven to despair by the strength of the corruption they in vain struggled to resist and the blind apathy of those whose interests they defended. Slowly but surely the direction of municipal affairs fell into the hands of practical politicians, who depended upon office-holding for a livelihood, and who ultimately became so numerous that they could control the party machinery and a portion of the spoils of the office.

And again:

The embryotic conspirators were already here and there through the city government, and it only remained for them to unite their forces. To do this effectually they required the absolute control of some of those great party organizations for which New York has always been peculiar.¹

This control of the primaries was truly, as Mr. Wingate stated, first and foremost among the political conditions which rendered possible the supremacy of the Ring.

The influence of the politicians to-day is no whit less than it was then. Indeed there is a close analogy between many of the conditions of those days and of to-day. Mozart Hall, the opposing Democratic organization, had just been appeased by Tammany and had discontinued its fight. The County Democracy has now apparently abandoned its fight against Tammany and stands united with it. Oakey Hall went over to Tammany from the Republican party in those days, and, in the words of Horace Greeley, "at a time when there was no new phase of political affairs and absolutely nothing in either national or state politics to call for or to explain it." The same drift among local politicians is noticeable to-day. The Democratic papers were jubi-

¹ Wingate, *An Episode in Municipal Government*, *North American Review*, 1874.

lant over the election of many former Republicans at the recent Tammany primaries, and the Tammany politicians are proud of it. There was an apparent calm in city politics until a very few days before that day in July of 1871 when the famous Tweed figures were published in the columns of *The New-York Times*. Only a few weeks before that day Tweed loudly asserted: "We propose to recognize the right of the governed to choose who shall be their governors." There is a calm now; is it the calm which precedes a storm?

This article may raise a question in the minds of some of the readers whether Tammany and the County Democracy and the Republican organization of New York city stand for the principles embodied in their platforms. The answer, which is sufficiently obvious, suggests a second question: What do these organizations represent if they are not true to those principles? Here again the answer is not doubtful. The platform of all these organizations is: The professional politician and public office for him. The politician of to-day does not enter public life inspired by a patriot's devotion to his country; he finds in it an opportunity of earning a livelihood with little effort. He often respects the commandments, and loves his family; but politics is to him a business.

Perhaps this article has afforded additional proof that the party organizations do not represent the party majority nor even its worthy leaders; that its decisions are the automatic registration of the decrees of the party boss; that the party name is but the trade-mark which the politicians have found it profitable to assume; and that the exclusive control which the professional politicians, as leaders of the party organizations, now enjoy in the selection of candidates to public office, and the unquestioning submission which the party voters give to their nominations, are eminently dangerous to Republican institutions.

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